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SUBJECT: BERLIN SPD: LEFTISTS TOLD TO DISBAND

REF: USBELIN 2595

1. SUMMARY: GOVMAYOR SCHUETZ HAS TOLD BERLIN LEFT-WING SOCIALISTS TO DISBAND FORMAL ORGANIZATION WITHIN PARTY; LEADER OF LEFTISTS, SENATOR RISTOCK, CRITICIZED SCHUETZ'S ACTION BUT IS EXPECTED TO MUTE HIS GROUP'S ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES. END SUMMARY.

2. AT DECEMBER 4 BERLIN SPD PARTY CONFERENCE, GOVMAYOR SCHUETZ, CHAIRMAN OF BERLIN SOCIALISTS, CALLED UPON PARTY'S LEFT-WING (SO-CALLED "UNITED LEFT") TO DISBAND ITS ORGANIZATION FOR GOOD OF PARTY. SCHUETZ TOLD APPROXIMATELY 300 DELEGATES IN CONGRESS HALL THAT IT "UNBEARABLE" THAT LEFTISTS HAD FORMED SEPARATE FORMAL ORGANIZATION WITHIN BERLIN SPD. SCHUETZ SHARPLY CRITICIZED SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT IT PROPER FOR GROUPS WITHIN PARTY TO FORM "FRIENDLY CIRCLES" (FREUNDEKREISEN) TO DISCUSS

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MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST. HE ADDED THAT HE HIMSELF BELONGED TO SUCH A GROUP.

2. LEADER OF "UNITED-LEFT", SENATOR HARRY RISTOCK, ONE OF TWO VICE CHAIRMEN OF BERLIN SPD, TOLD DELEGATES HE WOULD NOT DISSOLVE HIS GROUP. ROSTOCK DECLARED THAT ATTACKS ON "UNITED LEFT" BY BERLIN RIGHTISTS WERE PROMPTED BY FACT THAT BERLIN SPD HAD BEEN UNABLE TO COME TO GRIPS WITH PROBLEMS FACING CITY AND SOUGHT TO MAKE LEFTISTS SCAPEGOATS.

3. SHUETZ'S ATTACK ON LEFTISTS TOOK MANY BY SURPRISE, PARTICULARLY SINCE RISTOCK HAD BEEN VOCAL SUPPORTER OF SCHUETZ IN RECENT WEEKS WHEN LATTER FACED CRITICISM WITHIN PARTY FOR LACK OF LEADERSHIP. ADMONITION TO "UNITED LEFT" WAS CONTAINED IN VIGOROUS SPEECH IN WHICH SCHUETZ STATED, INTER ALIA, THAT ONE OF MAIN TASKS OF BERLIN SPD WAS TO SUPPORT POLICIES OF CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT. SCHUETZ ALSO REJECTED ONCE MORE POSSIBILITY OF COALITION WITH CDU AND SAID THERE NO ALTERNATIVE TO COALITION WITH FDP IN BERLIN OR BONN. SCHUETZ ALSO OUTLINED SERIES OF PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE COMMUNAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE IN BERLIN, NONE OF WHICH WERE NEW. HE REPEATED DEMANDS FOR INCREASED INDIRECT FEDERAL SUBSIDIES FOR HOUSING, FOR INCREASED TAX INCENTIVES FOR CITY AND FOR INCREASE IN PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN BERLIN. ON LATTER POINT, SCHUETZ CRITICIZED BY NAME AEG AND SIEMENTS FOR RECENTLY ANNOUNCED PLANS TO FURTHER REDUCE THEIR WORK FORCE IN BERLIN.

4. PRINCIPAL AUTHOR OF SCHUETZ'S SPEECH WAS SENAT PRESS CHIEF GUENTER STRUVE WHO TOLD MISOFF ON DEC. 5 THAT ONE REASON FOR ATTACK ON LEFTISITS WAS SCHUETZ'S INABILITY TO TOLERATE PARTY-WITHIN-A-PARTY SITUATION. STRUVE CLAIMED THAT "UNITED LEFT" HAD FORMAL CHAIRMAN (RISTOCK), DEPUTY CHAIRMEN AND "SECRETARY GENERAL" (HOUSE OF REPS MEMBER ACHIM RHEINLAENDER). STRUVE ADMITTED THAT RISTOCK HAD BEEN FAITHFUL TO SCHUETZ BUT ADDED THAT THIS WAS NOT OUT OF CONVICTION BUT SOLELY BECAUSE RISTOCK BELIEVED THERE IS NO VIABLE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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ALTERNATIVE TO SCHUETZ, AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER ELECTIONS OF 1979.

5. RISTOCK TOLD MISOFF ON DEC. 6, WITH USUAL WRY GOOD-HUMOR, THAT "UNITED LEFT" WOULD SIMPLY BECOME A "FRIENDLY CIRCLE". HE ADDED IN ALL SERIOUSNESS, HOWEVER, THAT HE HAD NO INTENTION OF ABANDONING HIS EFFORTS TO EXPAND LEFTISTS INFLUENCE WITHIN BERLIN SPD. RISTOCK SAID NOTHING IN WHAT HE WAS DOING WAS AIMED AT UNDERMINING INFLUENCE OR POSITION OF SCHUETZ. RISTOCK

DECLARED EMPHATICALLY TO MISOFF THAT THERE IS NO
REAL DIFFERENCE OF VIEW BETWEEN
HIM AND ANY OTHER BERLIN SPD LEADERS.

6. COMMENT: IT CLEAR THAT "UNITED LEFT" WILL CONTINUE
TO FUNCTION AS SEPARATE ORGANIZATION WITHIN BERLIN
SPD, ALTHOUGH RISTOCK MAY TRY TO HAVE GROUP MAINTAIN
LOWER PROFILE THAN BEFORE. HE OBVIOUSLY BELIEVES
MAINTENANCE OF HOMOGENOUS GROUP BEST WAY OF TAKING
CONTROL OF ENTIRE BERLIN PARTY. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE
A LEFT-ORIENTED SPD WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO
WIN AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY IN 1979 ELECTIONS OR EVEN
MAINTAIN 1975 SHOWING IN THIS CONSERVATIVE CITY.
SCHUETZ'S STRONG WORDS CLEARLY HAVE NOT RESOLVED
CONFLICT WITHIN BERLIN SOCIALIST CAMP; IF ANYTHING,
THEY MAY WELL HAVE EXACERBATED BEHIND-THE-SCENES
STRUGGLE BETWEEN LEFTISTS AND RIGHTISTS, FORCING
WOULD-BE NEUTRALS TO CHOOSE SIDES. END COMMENT.
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